

SUMMARY OF BOARD ITEM

ITEM # 03-4-1: Public Meeting to Consider a Health Update – Effect of Air Pollution Control on Hospital Admissions and Mortality from Lung and Heart Diseases

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Informational Item

DISCUSSION: The ARB staff provides the Board with regular updates on recent research findings on the health effects of air pollution. This month, staff will summarize several studies showing that reduced air pollution leads to lower hospital admissions and death rates.

SUMMARY AND IMPACTS: Over the past decade, a number of epidemiological studies have reported a significant association between exposure to air pollution and adverse health effects. Staff will briefly summarize several recent studies on the effect of improvements in air quality on illness and death rates due to lung and heart diseases. These studies come from Europe and Asia as well as the United States. A study from Dublin, Ireland, is particularly noteworthy in that a substantial decrease in particulate matter levels led to a 16% and 10% reduction in death rate due to lung and heart diseases, respectively. These reductions equated to over 300 fewer deaths per year in Dublin. Other studies showed that reduced levels of ozone, sulfur dioxide or particulate matter also led to health benefits.

